MINUTES

OF THE

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

HELD AT

JERUSALEM CHURCH,

AMITE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI,

On the 14th, 15th and 16th days of October, 1837.

NATCHEZ:

PRINTED AT THE FREE TRADER OFFICE.

1837.

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OF THE

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SATURDAY, October 14th, 1837.

1st. The introductory Sermon was delivered, according to previous appointment, by Elder J. B. Smith, at 11 o'clock, A. M., from Luke 16th Chapter, and part of the 2nd Verse, "give an account of thy stewardship."

2. The Delegates from the different Churches, then asssembled in the Meeting House, and business was opened with singing and prayer, by brother Felder: And letters received and read from nineteen churches, the names of the Delegates enrolled, and the state of the churches minuted.

3. Brother Charles Felder was chosen Moderator, and brother Henry D. F. Roberts, Clerk.

4. Ministering brethren present, were invited to seats.

5. Letters were received from three newly constituted churches, by the hands of their Delegates, petitioning admittance into the Association: viz—Mt. Enon, and Bethlehem, in St. Helena Parish, and Hebron, in Livingston Parish, Louisiana: which churches were admitted, and their Delegates received the right-hand of fellowship by the Moderator.

6. Brethren John P. Martin and William Fortenbery, messengers from the Pearl River Association, presented a letter and two packages of minutes; brother Norvel Grandberry presented a letter and package of minutes, from the Union Association; also brethren Giles Sommerill, and James Craft, from the Leaf River Association, presented a letter and package of minutes,—these brethren being invited, took their seats. A letter was also received from the Yazoo Association.

7. The following brethren were appointed to write letters of correspondence, viz: J. B. Smith to the Union, Mansfield Barlow to the Pearl River, and H. D. F. Roberts, to the Leaf River Associations.

8. The following brethren were appointed messengers of correspondence, viz: H. D. F. Roberts, S. Coker, and T. M. Bond, to the Union. C. Felder, J. Young, and Z. Rieves, to the Pearl and Leaf River Associations.

9. Brethren J. Young, R. Quin and C. Strickland, were appointed a committee, to arrange the preaching during the session; who reported as follows, viz: that brethren Norvel Grandberry, John P. Martin, and Davis Collins, preach in the order of their names, on Lord's day, and that brother Jesse Crawford, conclude the service: and that Brethren Sommerell, Olford Rieves, and Bailey, preach on Mondays, in the orders of their names.

10. Resolved that J. B. Smith, and S. M. Brian be a financial committee, to receive the contributions from the churches, and together with the Treasurer, to audit the Treasurer's account.

11. Adjourned to meet at 10 o'clock Monday morning, concluding prayer by brother Roberts.

The Lord's day was spent in preaching, according to the above arrangement. The congregation was large and attentive, and the exercises solemn and impressive.

MONDAY, October 16, 1837.

Met according to adjournment.

The moderator being necessarily absent, the Rev. Davis Collins, was requested to occupy the chair pro tem, who accordingly opened the business by singing and prayer.

12. The committee of arrangement, and revision reported, which report was received.

13. Brother Felder presented a circular address, published by the Mad River Baptist Association, which letter was read, unanimously adopted, and ordered to be printed with these minutes.

14. The letters of correspondence were called for, read and adopted.

15. The following query from Hepzibah church, was taken up, and ordered to be laid on the table, for future consideration. Query: Shall an individual professing himself to be a regular Baptist minister, coming into the vicinity of any of our churches,

and remaining for years, without uniting himself to the same, and especially making attempts to raise disturbances in any church or churches near him, be held as an orderly member in good standing among the Baptists?

16. Motions and resolutions being called for, brother A. W. Poole, proposed the following, viz:—

Resolved—That in consideration of the glorious outpourings of the Holy Spirit of God, upon our churches, and the increased demand for the preaching of the Gospel, the Louisiana, and Mississippi Baptist Home Missionary Society, call for the warm and fervent prayers, and confident support, of this association.

17. By brother J. B. Smith,

Resolved—That the thanks of this body, be unanimously voted to the vicinity of the Jerusalem Church, for their kindness and hospitality, manifested during our present session.

18. Appointed brother Henry D. F. Roberts, to write the next circular letter.

19. Appointed brother Zachariah Rieves, to preach the introductory sermon, at the next meeting of the Association; and brother Roberts his alternate.

20. Resolved—That the next meeting of this body, be held with the Jackson church, in the town of Jackson, Louisiana; commencing on Saturday, preceding the first Lord's day in October, 1838.

21. Appointed brother C. Felder, to superintend the printing and distribution, of 1250 copies of these minutes, and that he be authorised to call on the Treasurer for money to defray the expence of printing: and also, that he receive fifteen dollars for his services.

22. The financial committee, made the following report which was received, viz:

In the Treasurer's hands : : : :	$73 00	
Contributions from the Churches : :	110 12	
		183 12
Paid to corresponding messengers : :	29 00	
Paid for printing these minutes : :	100 37	
Paid C. Felder as superintendent : :	15 00	144 37
Remaining in the hands of the Treasurer.		$38 75

After singing and prayer, by Elder Davis Collins, the Association adjourned.

CHARLES FELDER, Moderator.

H. D. F. ROBERTS, Clerk.

A TABLE,
SHOWING THE STATE OF THE CHURCHES.

ABSENT DELEGATES MARKED THUS. *

NAMES OF CHURCHES.	NAMES OF DELEGATES.	Baptised,	Rec'd by letter,	Restored,	Dismissed,	Excluded,	Dead,	Total number,	No. of Ministers,	Time of Meeting,	Post Office,	Contributions,
N. Providence,	R. Thompson,	36	5		2		1	71	4	4th	Liberty;	$ 7 00
	James Jenkins,											
Ebenezar,	Lewis Perkins,	51		4	14	2	1	61		1st	Rosehill,	7 50
	W. Gilmore,											
Eastfork,	Charles Felder	44	4	3	4	2	1	67	1	2nd	Liberty,	6 00
	John Everett,											
Zion Hill,	Moses Seal,	49	1	2	2	1		87		1st	Liberty,	8 00
	Right Seal,											
Shiloh,	John Tison,*											
	Thos. McGraw*									v		
Jerusalem,	Jehu Wall,	83	3	4	10	2	1	111	1	3rd	Liberty,	8 00
	C. Strickland,											
Percy's Creek,	No represen't.											
Hepzibah,	H. D. F. Robt's	57		4	19	2	2	85	2	2&4	Clinton,	10 00
	S. Walker,											
	B. Taylor,											
Mt. Nebo,	R. Hutchison,	20	1	2	9		1	54		4th	Marbryville,	5 00
	G. W. Mixon,											
Mars Hill,	Jesse Young,	12	2	2	1		1	41	1	4th	Smithdale,	5 00
	R. Roundtree,											
Mt. Zion,	Willis Cotton,				2	3	2	21				5 00
Hopewell,	No represen'tn.							15				
Gallilee,	Jon. Straughan,	20	4	1	1			36		3rd		5 00
	G. P. Claughton,											
Salem,	Richard Quin,	17	6		3		1	62		3rd	Homesville,	6 00
	Lemuel Wall,											
Pinckneyville,	N. Boren,	5	1	1				14			Fort Adams,	0 00
Friendship,	S. Coker,	17	6		8		1	51	2	3rd	Homesville,	5 25
	Z. Rieves,											
Beulah,	R. F. Sibley,	54	4		7	1		64		1st	Sibila,	5 00
	W. L. Sibley,											
Ramah,	F. White,	27	6		6		1	41		3rd	Smithdale,	8 37½
	John Gill,											
Bethel,	M. Barlow,						1	10		2nd		1 00
	W. M. Turner,											
Jackson,	S. M. Brian,	36	8		6	1		54		1st	Jackson,	5 00
	Francis Brian,											
Clinton,	J. B. Smith,	16	4		1	1	1	52	2	1&3	Clinton,	5 00
	A. W. Poole,											
Hebron,	Thos. M. Bond,	5	5					17	1	2nd	Beach,	3 00
	H. L. Achord,											
Bethlehem.	D. W. Chaney,	7	2	1				27		3rd	Mt Pleasant	3 00
	A. Pennington,											
Mt. Enon,	J. Strickland,	1						15				2 00
	S. M. Bankston,											

The following ordained Ministers belong to this Association, viz: E. Courtney, C. Felder, S. Coker, J. Young, Z. Rieves, J. B. Smith, H. D. F. Roberts, T. M. Bond, and W. Wall; licensed A. W. Poole.

CHURCHES.
US. *

	Post Office,	Contributions,
berty;		$ 7 00
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ion, viz:
. Smith,
. Poole.

PURPOSES OF GOD.

FROM THE CIRCULAR LETTER OF THE MAD RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, SEPT. 1836.

But that we may improve this opportunity to the best possible advantage, permit us to invite your attention to a particular subject, and one which, we trust, will be regarded by all as worthy of our prayerful consideration; viz: the connexion between the purposes of God, and the use of appropriate means for their accomplishment.

I. That God has purposes relating to the government of his universe, and the operations of his grace among men, all who acknowledge his being and perfections must admit. To deny this, would be to make the Creator inferior to the creature; for what rational creature is there, who exercises any jurisdiction, or performs any important work, that does not act, as far as his imperfect nature will admit, in exact accordance with a previous purpose? And does any one suppose, that the great God, the maker and upholder of all things, governs and controls either the natural or the moral world without design? Can any one imagine, that the Father of mercies, and the very pattern and perfection of intelligence, has introduced a system of redemption amongst men, by which he is now engaged in delivering the lost and the guilty from the thraldom of sin, preparing them for his service here, and for immortal glory hereafter, without any previous purpose or intention? Surely a moment's reflection will convince any one, that whatever God does in the government or salvation of our guilty race, he does in accordance with a previously existing and settled purpose.

The purposes of God are perfect and unalterable. His infinite wisdom and perfect knowledge forbid the occurrence of any event, or change of circumstances, which would dictate the slightest alteration in his plans; and his absolute power precludes the possibility of frustration by any opposing obstacle. It is with great propriety, therefore that God himself assures us that "his counsel shall stand—that he will do all his pleasure." These purposes may be made known, or concealed to us, as God pleases. But, in relation to the plan of salvation in which we are chiefly concerned, it has pleased God to reveal, by the spirit of prophecy, the outlines of his eternal purpose and grace, which embrace the salvation of his people. The work of salvation is represented in Scripture as being properly and strictly the work of God. Christ, the ransom-price of our redemption, is the gift of God. "He hath made him to be sin for us." The renovation of the human heart, and the translation of a sinner out of darkness into marvellous light,

is universally ascribed to God. Of his own will begat he us. We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. According to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Now, if the salvation of sinners is properly, as these Scriptures teach, the work of God, then, according to the position established, their salvation is effected in accordance with God's previous purpose. Hence the purpose of God, which is eternal, unchangeable, and unfrustrable, embraces the salvation of every soul that God ever saved, or ever will save. This view is confirmed by the Apostle's language to the Ephesians—"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love having, predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved:" It is also confirmed by his language to Timothy—"Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." And here is the very essence of the doctrine of election or predestination, which is so much contested. The very pith of this doctrine is simply God's previous intention or purpose, to do, in the salvation of sinners, just what he does do. If God, at a certain time, and in a certain way, calls, renews and saves a certain individual, predestination in reference to that individual, denotes God's previous design, to call, renew, and save him, at that certain time, and in that particular way. Hence if the doctrine of predestination embraces any one sinner that God saves, it embraces, of necessity, every sinner that God has saved or will save. Election, therefore, is necessarily personal and eternal.

Now, surely, no person who is capable of discovering the connexion between three ideas, can admit that salvation is really and truly the work of God, and yet deny the doctrine of election, as here explained. If sinners save themselves, this doctrine may be false; but if God saves them, it is true, and will stand when the heavens and the earth shall be no more. God has a definite purpose, therefore, fixed and unalterable, which embraces every thing that he does, or has any control over, in the plan of redemption.

II. That God usually employs means in the accomplishment of these gracious purposes, is equally obvious. The gift of the Sacred Scriptures, written by prophets and apostles, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost—the coming of John, as the harbinger of the promised Messiah—the personal labors and sufferings of Christ—the calling and commissioning the apostles to preach the Gospel—the establishment of a permanent Gospel ministry—a visible church—and the ordinances of his house—all go to show, that the system of salvation is a system of means, as well as purposes—that God employs the instrumentality of his people

in the promotion of his cause, and in the accomplishment of his merciful designs toward men.

Now, if God has purposes which embrace the work of man's redemption, and if he employs means in the accomplishment of those purposes, there certainly must be a connection between them; and this connection is the more important to be understood by us, because the means usually employed in effecting the divine purposes, involve, primarily and specially, the instrumentality of his people.

In order to illustrate the connexion under consideration, we would invite your attention—

1. To the account given by Luke, of Paul's shipwreck, as recorded in the 27th of Acts.

1st. Observe the language of the apostle commencing at the 22d v. When they had been overwhelmed with a tempest for many days, and their exposure was such as to destroy all hope of their being saved, then Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, "I exhort you to be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you; for there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Cæsar; and God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." Here you perceive God was pleased to make known to the apostle, that it was his settled purpose to deliver him, and the entire ship's crew, from the perils of the deep; and Paul assured them, that he believed it would be even as the Lord had said.

2d. Observe his language again in the 31st and 32d verses. As the storm still continued, and their apparent danger increased the shipmen immagined they drew near to land, and fearing they might fall upon rocks, let down the boat, and were about to flee out of the ship for safety. "Then Paul said unto the centurion and to the soldiers, except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat and let her fall off." Are we to suppose, from this language, that Paul began to doubt the promise and faithfulness of the almighty, of which he was so well assured a short time before? No: this is impossible: yet he makes the use of means absolutely necessary to the fulfilment of God's promise to save them. The sailors must abide in the ship, and discharge their duty. And what was the result? The shipmen, moved with fear at the solemn warning of the apostle, desisted from their purpose and remained at their posts, and God's gracious promise, through their instrumentality, was verified: "So it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land."

This is a most striking illustration of the connection there was in this instance between the purpose of God, clearly revealed, and the use of appropriate means for its accomplishment—a connection distinctly recognized by the apostle, and one on which he fixed his only hope of deliverance.

A similar connection we recognize in various cases in common life. God has promised, that seed-time and harvest shall continue until the end of time; yet the husbandman considers it not the less necessary to plough and sow and cultivate his fields. The period of our existence here on earth is unalterably fixed in the purpose of the Almighty. Job says, (14: 5,) "Man's days are determined; the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass." Yet who of us, in the hour of danger, would not avail himself of the means of self-preservation? who, in case of sickness in his family, would not employ medical aid? Do we act, in such cases, as though we considered means inconsistent with God's purposes? Do we not always act upon the principle, that there is a necessary connection between divine purposes, and the use of suitable means for their accomplishment.

II. This connection may be exemplified by considering God's revealed purpose to establish, build up, and extend over the whole earth the kingdom of Christ, and the appointment and use of human instrumentality for the accomplishment of that purpose.

(1.) God has revealed a settled purpose in reference to the establishment and universal triumph of Immanuel's kingdom.

At an early period God made an unconditional promise to Abraham, saying, (Gen. 12: 3,) "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." That this promise referred to the Messiah, we are assured by the apostle to the Gal. 3: 16. The divine purpose concerning the establishment of this kingdom, is thus disclosed by the prophet Daniel, 2: 44. "And in the days of these kings, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." This purpose was revealed more than 600 years before Messiah's advent; and that part of it which relates to the setting up of the kingdom, has long since been fulfilled. The reign of King Jesus was introduced by John the Baptist; confirmed by the personal ministry of Christ himself; and fully established by inspired apostles on the day of Pentecost. Again—Daniel says, (7: 27,) "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Isaiah, referring to this gracious reign, says (52: 10,) "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." Paul and Barnabas are equally explicit, (Acts 13: 47,) "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." The same idea is inculcated by Christ, when he compares this kingdom, in its commencement and progress, to a grain of mustard seed, which was the smallest of all seeds, but

in its growth exceeded every other plant, and became a tree in which the fowls of the air lodged. Upon this divine purpose was based the encouraging assurance of the Saviour to his early disciples,—"Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Because Christ's kingdom was small in its commencement, and its heaven-born subjects are still but few, compared with the kingdoms of this world, we are apt to think it will always be so—that the terms little flock will always be applicable to the fold of Jesus. But this is a radical mistake. The grain of mustard seed, planted by John, and watered by the hand of the Redeemer himself, sprang up, and has been growing and rising from that day to this, and, ere long, is destined to rear its majectic head above all the trees of the field, and shoot forth its branches unto the ends of the world. The stone cut out of a mountain without hands, which began its visible motion on the day of Pentecost, shall roll on, breaking in pieces every opposing obstacle, and increasing in size and momentum, until it shall fill the whole earth. John, who, in the distant isle of Patmos, was permitted to trace in holy vision, the onward march of Messiah's reign to its final consumation, exclaimed with estacy, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.

Here, then, we have distinctly revealed the purpose of Almighty God, plain, definite, and absolute; which embraces and renders certain the establishment, progress, and universal triumph of Immanuel's kingdom. Not that the whole human family are to become the willing subjects of this kingdom, but God's people shall be willing in the day of his power; and those who remain the enemies of Christ he will rule with a rod of iron—for "he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet."

(2d.) God has appointed, and put in requisition, human instrumentality, for the accomplishment of this grand purpose.

Here, observe, the question is not, will the kingdom of Christ spread and ultimately triumph,—and will "the ransomed of the Lord" actually "return and come to Zion?" or, in other words, will God fulfil his own purpose? This question, in the view of every believer of divine revelation, we suppose settled with absolute certainty. But the inquiry is, how are we to expect God will do this work? Will he do it by means, or without means! Will he, by a direct influence, to the exclusion of all means, operate upon the hearts of sinners in different parts of the earth—or will he employ the doctrine of that cross, and the instrumentality of the church?

In settling this question, we have but two general sources of information, viz., the direct testimony of Scripture, and the history of God's operation in days past, which fully exemplify the manner in which we are to expect he will accomplish his own purposes. The language of the Redeemer himself to Saul, at the

time of his conversion, as plain on this point.—"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people and the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sin, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Here, surely, is human instrumentality for the extension of Immanuel's kingdom, recognized by Christ's own appointment. In Peter's defence, when called to an account for preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, he says of Cornelius,—"He showed us how he had seen an angel, who said unto him, send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, who shall tell thee words whereby thou and thy house shall be saved." Here, where God would fulfil his purpose of grace to the household of Cornelius, Peter must be sent for, and his words must be the medium through which the salvation must flow. "As Peter began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them."

In accordance with these individual instances, the commission which embraced the operations of divine grace on an enlarged and general principle, was given. God had declared, in the language of prophecy, that his people were to be gathered out of "every kindred, nation, and tongue," and that Christ must be for salvation "unto the ends of the earth." Hence, in instituting the commission, which was to put in operation the appointed means of accomplishing these purposes, he said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." The appointed means answer to the revealed purpose. The duty of preaching is as universal as the design of God to save. Has he a people among all nations? Then repentance and remission of sins in Jesus' name must be preached among all nations. The connection between God's purposes, and the use of appropriate means for their accomplishment, is most obvious and absolute. They can no more be separated than cause and effect. The apostles understood this connection, and, in obedience to their ascended Lord, they went forth "testifying both to small and great, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord also working with them, and confirming their word with signs following." And the whole history of the church sustains the necessity of human instrumentality in the accomplishment of God's purpose of grace toward men. Was the holy spirit poured down, and three thousand converted on the day of Pentecost? It was through the instrumentality of the apostles' preaching. Did the kingdom of Christ established first in Jerusalem, break over the boundaries of Judea, and begin to spread abroad in the world? It was when, by a persecution raised against the disciples in Jerusalem, "they were scattered abroad and went every

where preaching the word." Were sinners converted and churches gathered in Ephesus, in Corinth, Philippi, Collossi, Thessalonica, and Rome? It was through the instrumentality of Paul, Barnabas, and others, whose labors God was pleased to own and bless in the accomplishment of this good work. And the same is true in reference to the work of God in every age and in every land. We may trace the history of the church from the days of John the Baptist, down to the present time; we may traverse the inhabited earth over, and wherever we find genuine disciples of Christ—wherever we find churches organized, and the ordinances of the Gospel administered, we may readily discover the means that have been employed—the channels of human instrumentality through which the grace of God has flowed into those regions. God has accomplished the work, and he has done it "according to his own purpose and grace;" but he has done it by means—by the promulgation of the Gospel through the instrumentality of his people. The treasures of Gospel grace are "committed to earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might be of God."

Let us, then, dear brethren, consider the practical bearing which this subject has upon us. It is often said that the doctrine of divine purposes destroys human obligation, discards the use of means, and encourages spiritual indolence in the church of God. We do not know but some of God's people may have perverted the divine purposes to these unholy ends; for every branch of truth has been more or less abused even by the church. But we do know, that God's purposes, rightly understood, will have no such influence. The love of God, shed abroad in the heart, imparts the very spirit of obedience. If any man love me, he will keep my words, said Jesus. And when it is understood that pursuant to his own eternal purpose, he is doing a great and good work amongst men, and that in his established plan of operation, he has been pleased to embrace the instrumentality of his people, the spontaneous language of every true disciple is—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Lord, here am I, send me." And a knowledge of the eternal and unalterable purpose of Jehovah, to make the cause of Christ triumph, cannot fail to nerve the soul with holy fortitude, and render the soldiers of Prince Immanuel at once faithful, bold, and invincible. No motive is so powerful in the human breast as the assurance of success. This assurance we may all have in every scriptural effort for the advancement of the cause of Christ. Hence the language of Paul, (1 Cor. 9: 26) "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." Hence his exhortation to his brethren, (1 Cor. 15, 58.) "Therefore, beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know your labor is not in vain in the Lord."